



The recent INL Technology Showcase and Information Fair conveyed information about INL's technology licensing and economic development efforts to local officials, university and government partners, entrepreneurs and potential investors.

INL highlights technology, collaboration to encourage economic development

By [Marilyn Whitney](#), *INL Communications & Governmental Affairs*

After visiting Idaho National Laboratory last year Mayor Tammy De Weerd of Meridian, Idaho, started thinking about how to partner with the laboratory to help spur economic development in her city and others throughout the state.

Recently, Mayor De Weerd hosted a group of nearly 100 local officials, university and government partners, entrepreneurs and potential investors to learn more about INL's technology licensing and economic development efforts. Participants in this INL Technology Showcase and Information Fair heard from INL researchers about technology deployment successes and specific research initiatives in bioenergy and advanced vehicle testing. The [city of Meridian](#), INL and the [Center for Advanced Energy Studies](#) also highlighted at the fair a project to test a new technology developed by a Boise-based company to produce energy from Meridian's wastewater treatment system.

The collaborative effort includes Advanced Bioenergy Systems (ABES), city of Meridian, Boise State University, University of Idaho and CAES. The project will use existing city infrastructure and facilities for a full-scale test of the new "anaerobic digestion" technology developed by ABES.

Although anaerobic digestion is a well-known process for producing renewable energy resources such as methane, the patented ABES process is intended to decrease the total amount of waste to be treated, reduce carbon dioxide emitted, produce energy, test the patented process and develop a more financially attractive green energy alternative.

"This isn't a new concept," said deWeerd, "but this technology provides a better, more efficient way to do it."

"INL and CAES are well suited for this kind of technology-based coordination and networking," INL Director of Technology Deployment Brent Stacey told participants. CAES, with its university collaborators, brought together the partners to organize and propose the technical evaluation and potential roadmap for pursuing this green project. If successful, it may establish a model for other municipalities to undertake their own green energy projects.



INL Director of Technology Deployment Brent Stacey described INL as an "innovation machine."



Participants at the event learned how INL and its research supports technology-based economic development.

Stacey spoke to the group about the renewed emphasis on technology deployment both nationally within the Department of Energy and at INL. The lab's technology deployment mission includes providing laboratory innovations to the public sector and working with partners in the private sector to commercialize technology.

Over the past 10 years, INL has issued hundreds of licenses to established companies, startups, and spinoffs. As Stacey put it, "INL is an innovation machine."

INL supports technology-based economic development through participation in organizations such as the [Idaho Economic Development Association](#), [Idaho Rural Partnership](#) and [Idaho TechConnect](#).

Attendees heard about INL's Technical Assistance Program, which provides innovators with up to 40 hours of assistance without charge. The program also assists technology-based businesses in overcoming difficult barriers in order to advance their enterprises for business retention, expansion

or creation.

INL research chemist Bob Fox spoke about his technology deployment successes at INL, while INL researcher David Muth updated participants on INL's bioenergy and biofuel work. INL research engineer Barney Carlson discussed the lab's Advanced Vehicle Testing Activity. A reception after the formal presentations included displays on nuclear energy, biofuels, CAES and INL education programs.

After the events concluded, deWeerd commented, "I look forward to continuing to find ways for the city and INL to work together to strengthen the economic vitality of Meridian and the state of Idaho."

Additional Information:

Read coverage of the event in the [Idaho Business Review](#) and [Boise FOX affiliate KTRV](#)

[Feature Archive](#)